

Music Theory V – Form & Analysis (hybrid)

MUST 3215

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Brian Jarvis (bejarvis@utep.edu)

The University of Texas at El Paso – Fall 2021

Course description

This course was designed to get you to enjoy formal analysis by being able to analyze the music that you like to listen to and play. While this may seem like an obvious path, it's actually completely impractical in many situations because everyone likes different music, different topics have more theory than others, and there's only so much time available to learn about different musical styles (and more musical styles than any one person can learn in any detail 😊). However, I've adopted a framework and approach that will allow for a degree of freedom on your end that can make studying the music you love, a reality. Instead of me picking out the pieces for you to analyze on your assignments, you will pick the pieces you want to analyze instead. We'll be using a software I wrote called BriFormer (that's right, I put my name in it 😊) and an approach to musical form that allows for you to intuitively do formal analysis even if you don't know any theory about the form you're analyzing. This approach is really fun, and it means you can start analysis without being overwhelmed by too much terminological baggage.

We will, however, learn common terms and ideas. Terms aren't bad after all, they're good (!) but too many upfront can become an unnecessary obstacle. Just to give a quick example, the word "chord" is a term. You can probably use it with ease, but just imagine that you didn't have it and how you'd have to explain what a chord was each time you wanted to use that word. Instead of saying, "I love the chord at 2:01. It's so unexpected!" you'd have to say something like, "I love the simultaneous collection of notes that sound together as one at 2:01. It's so unexpected!" It's just awkward. Not impossible, but also not efficient. Terms are basically containers for more complex ideas that we can use to have more intricate thoughts and conversations. So, in addition to practicing analysis with the music you're interested in, you'll also learn commonly used vocabulary and musical forms associated with European Classical music and modern popular music. I consider this part of the course the "received knowledge" portion. The other portion of the class will simply be to review and practice with pitch-based phenomena like chord spelling, identification, and harmonic analysis to keep you in good practice and to enhance your music-reading speed and ability.

This course is brand new (!) so, that means that it has not been perfected over a period of years like most of your other courses. This also means there will be some bumps in the road along the way, but I ask for your patience with these sorts of growing pains, and that you help me find and fix issues so that the course will be better for everyone. Remember, if you find a mistake in a reading or on a quiz early enough, I can fix it so that everyone else doesn't have to deal with it and that's very helpful. False alarms are okay too, so please let me know if you think you found something. Also, my software, BriFormer, is brand new and I don't have a team of developers or testers to make sure that everything is perfect, it's just me 😊 so please be patient with me on that as well. Okay, let's go 🙌!

Useful information

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| Course website | The course website (Blackboard) has course documents, homework, handouts, online quizzes, discussion boards, and peer-review assignments. |
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| Office hours: | <p>Office Hour #1: 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM either Wednesday or Friday. This meeting will simultaneously be available by Zoom.</p> <p>Office Hour #2 Online via Zoom - 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM every Monday</p> <p>By Appointment Meetings can also be scheduled by appointment (just email me to set up a meeting).</p> |
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| Email | <p>UTEP email is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your email within 24-48 hours of receipt. Please feel free to email at any time. If it's late, I turn my notifications off, so it won't bother me. If I ask you a question in my response, please write me back. When I say "please let me know either way," I'm serious and I am awaiting your response.</p> |
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Checking your email

Our primary communication will be done by email so it's critical that you get in the habit of checking your UTEP email every day. I recommend that you check it at least twice each day.

Recommended textbook??

- There is NO required textbook for this course. I actually wrote most of the materials you'll read this semester and they're all free and can be found either online as part of the [Open Music Theory 2 project](#), on [my personal website](#), or I'll upload the reading to Blackboard.

Required technology items

- Internet-connected, Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer (**available for free to UTEP students in the main library**)
- Regular access to a Windows or Mac (MacOS, not iOS), laptop or desktop computer
 - If you don't have one, [apply for a long-term laptop from UTEP](#)
 - Needs a current version of Google's Chrome browser
 - NOTE: The Blackboard "app" is not supported in this course
 - NOTE: Phones and tablets are not supported. They may often work, but expect occasional issues that are only solvable by using a Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer.
- Headphones/Speakers

Grading

- Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated as outlined below:

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|------------------------|-----|
| ○ Proficiency Quizzes | 15% |
| ○ Reading Quizzes | 15% |
| ○ Analysis Assignments | 35% |
| ○ Peer Feedback | 15% |
| ○ Final Project | 20% |
- Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

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|---|--------|---|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|----------|
| A | 90-100 | B | 80-89 | C | 70-79 | D | 60-69 | F | Below 60 |
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- Grade updates will be provided weekly throughout the semester via the email address on file in Blackboard. Please feel free to inquire about your current average at any time.

Course Format

- **Hybrid Course** (Mostly Online + Analysis Days)
 - This is a hybrid course. The majority of this course takes place online on my website and within Blackboard.
 - This course is mostly online but has a semi-optional, in-person component. There are typically two days' worth of online work each week (Tuesday and Thursday), but we will have bi-weekly Analysis Days which are in-person meetings. These occur after each analysis cycle and will essentially be every other Tuesday.
 - During these in-person sessions, we will share analyses, discuss any issues, and practice the analysis of music. This will range from discussing strategies for pieces you worked on and/or me demonstrating concepts on pieces that I bring in.
 - Attendance at the bi-weekly Analysis Days is not strictly required. Attending at least half of the bi-weekly Analysis Days **unlocks the possibility** of getting an A in the course. If you decide to attend anywhere from 0 to less than half of the analysis days, getting an A in the course is not possible. This plays no other role in determining your grade. For example, if you're earning a B, C, D, or F and you attend all Analysis Days, you will simply get the grade you earned, nothing will change. One last example, if you attend anywhere from 0 to less than half of the Analysis Days and you have scored perfectly on all tests, assignments, and online work – because you have not unlocked the possibility of getting an A – your grade will be converted to a B.
- **Due Dates**
 - All assignments and online quizzes will be due *before* midnight on the scheduled due date. Just so you know, if something is due before midnight, Blackboard will count it late if you submit it *at* midnight instead of before it.
- **Availability of Materials**
 - The entire week's worth of materials will typically become available some time on Friday of the previous week.
- **Proficiency Quizzes**
 - On most weeks, there are proficiency quizzes due each week on either Tuesday or Thursday. The proficiency quizzes are meant to give you regular, ongoing practice with core concepts as well as review with more recent concepts. While available, they can be taken as many times as necessary and you will be able to review the results immediately upon completing each quiz. Only the highest score ever recorded during the period of availability will count toward your grade. These quizzes are graded pass/fail. So, if the minimum is 80% and you scored an 85% you will get full credit for that quiz (you can think of it as 100% if you want).
- **Reading Quizzes**

- An important learning objective in this course is to increase your level of reading comprehension. To that end, new topics will be introduced each week through reading. I've created reading quizzes to help point you toward important aspects of the reading and to ensure reading comprehension. Reading quizzes are graded differently than proficiency quizzes. Reading quizzes can only be taken 4 times and Blackboard will count your highest grade of all your attempts. I put a "suggested minimum" on these to give you a recommended target, but these quizzes are NOT pass/fail. You'll get the exact grade you earned. I actually wrote most of the materials you'll read this semester and they're either online as part of the [Open Music Theory 2 project](#), on [my personal website](#), or I'll upload the reading to Blackboard. A few topics will be introduced by video and will still be paired with "reading" quizzes. Music theory is taught in different ways so you can't really be sure that a YouTube video or Wikipedia will have the same content, approach, or terminology. If you have questions, please email me and I'd be happy to give you a personalized explanation and have a back-and-forth email exchange on the topic and we can also have a virtual Zoom meetings as well.

Analysis Assignments & Peer Assessment

This course is designed to get you to engage with and study the music you love. I don't know what music you love, but you do! To that end, you'll be selecting the pieces of music that you'd like to analyze and sharing your analysis with the class. We will use the BriFormer software that I created for this purpose. It's free and it's on my personal website. The assignments will alternate between looking at large form and phrase structure, heading toward a final project that includes the large form, and the phrase structure for the entire piece.

One lesson that teachers learn early on is that teaching concepts and grading assignments is a really fast way to improve your understanding of a topic. Each year we prepare lectures, readings, and grade assignments. We learn to predict the types of issues that will crop up and so we prepare to face those issues differently now that we've seen them. It also makes us aware of the types of mistakes that students commonly make, or maybe how to avoid traps that students often fall into. It's common to think, "if only the students see what I see when I'm grading, they would make so much more progress." One powerful pedagogical strategy for remedying this issue, is peer assessment. Peer assessment is, in many ways, the reverse process of completing an assignment. Instead of just doing the work, you're looking at completed work, and deciding if it meets certain criteria. It really is the other side of learning and if you've heard the expression, "my students teach me more than I teach them," this is partially what that sentiment is about.

Each of your assignments will be go through the peer-assessment process. The assignment/peer-assessment process will be a two-week cycle. One week, you'll post your analysis, and the next week, you'll be responsible for evaluating two of your peer's assessments. You'll listen to their piece, and try to understand their analysis, rate various components of their analysis with a rubric, and suggest alternative readings for any places that you had different ideas.

Let's be Positive and Friendly 😊

Remember that it's easy for a criticism to be taken personally (even when it wasn't intended that way) and, though you can't control how another person responds to something, you want to take great care to think positively and word things in a way that is helpful even it's a criticism. For example, the feedback "I can't believe you thought this was a rondo. It's obviously ternary form!" is unhelpful and just seems rude. Also, it's hard to tell if the exclamation point is intended in a positive or negative way. Instead you want to think like an educator and a friend, not an enemy. Say something

constructive by trying to figure out why they made the decision (there's usually a good reason for the mistake) so that you can help the person instead of putting them down. For example, maybe this person confused Rondo and Ternary because the B section had a really short reference to the A theme, so they split up the B section into three pieces B, A, and C and that's how they came up with Rondo. So, the misunderstanding was that a motivic reference would be counted as a complete section when that's not the usual way of doing things. So, the feedback would be something like, "I know that you said the form was Rondo, but I actually think it's Ternary form because I didn't count the short motivic reference to A at 1:52 as an actual section, instead I thought the whole section from 1:30-2:05 was the B section. That way, all the sections seem to be a similar length instead of having a really short A section in the middle." Honestly, giving bad feedback is way easier than giving good feedback, so what I'm asking you to do takes care and attention to detail. Reread your feedback before submitting and reread it as if the feedback was directed toward you. Read it in a sarcastic voice, a happy voice, and an angry voice to see if it can easily be misinterpreted and then revise your feedback to avoid issues.

Netiquette

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these "netiquette" (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- o Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- o Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- o When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- o Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential (however the University has access to all courses and emails, so it's not private in that sense). Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and the professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

Final Project

While the analysis assignments have you either focusing on large form, or a detailed examination of phrase structure, the final project will combine the two. You will be able to select the work you'd like to analyze for the final project. The detailed phrase structure analyses take comparatively more time than the large formal analysis so expect that the project will take quite a bit more time than the analysis assignments because you need to provide a complete phrase-level analysis of the entire work in addition to the larger formal analysis. It is expected that you will recognize and apply the concepts learned throughout the course on your final project. The final project will also include a personal reflection that you write where you reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of your final project as well as a reflection about what you learned in the course. More information about the final project can be found in the final project instructions on Blackboard.

No late work

Late work is **NOT** accepted. Unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor, any missed homework, quizzes, and exams will receive a grade of a zero. Exceptions can be made in the case of a genuine emergency or significant illness if written documentation is shown to the instructor within one week after the due date (e.g., a note excusing you from class from a health care provider, an accident report, etc.). Conflicts between work and school will NOT count as reasons for late work. Email the instructor if you are unsure about whether a situation qualifies as a genuine emergency that would qualify for an exception.
unexcused.

Issues Uploading to Blackboard

If an assignment needs to be uploaded to Blackboard but, for whatever reason, it's not working, you can email me the assignment BEFORE the due date AS A PLACEHOLDER. You still need to upload it to Blackboard by the end of the day it was due to receive credit. Please write text in the body of the email so that I know why you're emailing me a file. It can be something simple like, "Dr. Jarvis, I can't get the file to upload to Blackboard so I'm emailing you before the due date with my assignment as a placeholder. I'll try again later today."

Academic Integrity and Scholastic Dishonesty

Information about The University of Texas at El Paso's definitions and expectations regarding academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty can be found at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>. In this course, all homework, quizzes, and exams are to be completed on your own. That means you should not discuss answers with anyone besides me, Dr. Jarvis. Do not listen to the examples together. When working with tutors, you cannot work on answers to assignments or quizzes that count towards your grade. You are allowed and encouraged to work on anything from the "Practice Area" on Blackboard with other people. You can practice concepts together when using non-assignment and non-quiz material. For example, you can practice harmonic analysis together by analyzing Clementi's piano sonatas as long the excerpts you practice with are not on the assignments or quizzes. Actual or attempted cheating, plagiarism, and collusion will not be tolerated. Suspected violations will go directly to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution for consideration.

Accommodations and Support Services:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Center for Accommodations and Support Services and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

Syllabus Change Policy

The information on this syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via email.